



Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers

November 20, 2006

Latest Traffic Safety News

UA Study Reveals Changing Traffic Patterns Over Thanksgiving Holiday

The University of Alabama CARE Research & Development Laboratory compiles and analyzes state crash statistics. They found that historically, the most dangerous day to travel over the Thanksgiving holiday has been Wednesday. In the last couple of years, many schools have changed holiday schedules, allowing families to leave on Monday or Tuesday. This has caused Alabama roadways to have a higher traffic concentration on all three days as opposed to the previous super concentration just on Wednesday. In 2005, crash statistics were higher on the Mondays before and after Thanksgiving than on the Wednesday before the holiday. The total number of crashes over the entire week has remained about the same. This makes Wednesday potentially a little safer than when everyone was on the road at the same time. During the Thanksgiving week, the total number of crashes is actually lower when compared to the typical work week. The total number of crashes is reduced during the Thanksgiving week because there are fewer commercial and commuter travelers on the road on Thursday and Friday. However, although the number of crashes is lower, there are more fatal crashes during that week. Studies show these fatal crashes can be accounted for primarily by the increased use of alcohol during the holiday weekend. Alcohol fatalities usually occur in rural areas and late at night, so this might also be a combination to avoid when choosing driving routes.

Christmas and New Year's traffic patterns tend to be better overall because the holiday is spread during a longer period of time, so no one day has the same high concentration as just before the Thanksgiving holiday. Traveling on Christmas Day and New Year's Day are safer days to be on the road than other days because traffic is relatively light.

For the week between Christmas and New Year's, many people are out of work and school, so every night is similar to a typical Friday or Saturday night. If you factor in the holiday parties, the DUI rate increases dramatically.

Combinations of alcohol and speed crashes are the cause of most of the fatal crashes in Alabama during the holidays. Conforming to the following list of behaviors would eliminate the probability of being involved in a fatal crash:

- Never drink and drive, or ride with anyone who has even had a single drink.
- Avoid late night hours when others who have been drinking are more apt to be driving.
- Observe the speed limit, move along with the traffic, and keep a safe distance from other vehicles on the roadway. Reducing your speed by 10 miles per hour can reduce the likelihood of a fatal crash by 50 percent.
- Always wear your restraints, regardless of how long the trip, and keep the kids properly restrained in the back seat.
- Watch the weather reports, and plan your trip accordingly.
- If you are driving at, or right after, dusk, be particularly aware of deer activity, especially on rural roads; watch for deer so that you will not be surprised and over-react.



Sleep Apnea Screening For Drivers Reduces Crashes

Obstructive Sleep Apnea Syndrome (OSA) is a common sleep disorder found in approximately 5% of the general population, but 11.6% of the shift work population. Circadian Technologies has found that each undiagnosed employee in the workforce costs an additional \$6,000 per year in apnea-related expenses, including increased physician and hospital visits, cardiovascular treatment costs, increased on-the-job injuries, and absenteeism. Schneider National recently published a white paper reporting that its sleep apnea screening and treatment program has generated a strong return on investment in the form of savings on medical costs, accident reduction, reduced turnover and increased productivity. Among the 348 drivers diagnosed with Sleep Disorder Breathing (SDB) and who were treated, medical costs accrued were slashed in half per month. There was also a 73% reduction in preventable driving crashes among a group of 225 SDB-diagnosed drivers treated with Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) devices. Sources: The Trucker News Services & Circadian Technologies

MADD Announces New National Campaign To Eliminate Drunk Driving

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) will launch a campaign on November 20th to stop drunk driving in the United States. Despite a 40 percent decline in alcohol-related traffic fatalities since MADD was founded in 1980, the threat still remains. MADD believes the tools are now at hand to eliminate drunk driving from the United States. For further information, visit www.madd.org

UPS Receives Green Cross For Safety

Atlanta-based UPS will be the 2007 recipient of National Safety Council's Green Cross for Safety Medal. The Green Cross for Safety Medal cites UPS, the world's largest package delivery company and the country's third-largest employer, for its exemplary century-long commitment to workplace safety. UPS will celebrate its 100th birthday next year, and safety has been part of the company's leadership philosophy from the start. More than 4,200 active UPS drivers have achieved membership in the company's elite Circle of Honor by steering clear of accidents for 25 years or more. Of those, 107 have gone 35 years or more without an accident, and six have gone 40 years or more. Collectively, UPS's active Circle of Honor drivers have racked up nearly 117,000 years of accident-free driving. Today, UPS' 102,000 drivers worldwide log more than 2 billion miles a year and average less than one accident for every million miles driven.

Three Existing Technologies Can Reduce Fatalities

An October 9th article by Charles J. Murray in Design News reported that there are currently three ways to reduce fatalities. In the long term, advanced sensors and smart highways are the keys to zero fatalities. But for now three existing technologies, electronic stability control, alcohol ignition interlocks, and use of seat belts could have a huge impact on the reduction of the 43,000 highway fatalities that occur in the U.S. every year. For further information, visit, <http://www.designnews.com/index.asp?layout=moreByThisAuthor&articleid=CA6342990>

Vehicle Backover Avoidance Technology Study

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has released a report that examines motor vehicle backover crashes involving pedestrians. The report also evaluates available technologies that might help to reduce these types of crashes. The report was requested by the U.S. Congress. To download the pdf, visit http://www.trb.org/news/blurb_detail.asp?id=7001



Forbes' Lists 2007 Least-Safe Cars

Forbes magazine's list of the 2007 least safe vehicles consisted entirely of small passenger cars. They looked at three main factors: a car's accident-avoidance features; results of crash tests, which are conducted in controlled environments; and real-world data, in the rates of injury claims filed per vehicle. Automakers with cars on the list complained about the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's testing procedures citing the unfairness of singling out cars with poor ratings in one area but multiple good scores in others. For further information, visit http://www.forbes.com/vehicles/2006/10/30/safety-cars-airbags-forbeslife-vehicles-cx_dl_1031safe.html

2005 North Carolina Deer-Motor Vehicle Crash Data Available

Deer collisions and crashes caused as a result of deer continue to be a significant hazard to North Carolina drivers across the state. Deer-motor vehicle crashes reached an all time high in 2005 with a total of 15,940 reportable crashes. Deer crashes occur most frequently in October, November and December and are more likely to happen from 5-7 a.m. and between 6 p.m. and midnight. For tips to lower your risk of a crashing with a deer and for crash data for all NC counties, please visit http://www.hsnc.unc.edu/safety_info/animal_vehicle/index.cfm

Vehicle Modifications Standards Needed For Disabled Drivers

A recent NY Times article focused attention on safety issues that disabled drivers and automotive dealers are grappling with because there are no standards available on vehicle modifications. It is estimated that there are over 400,000 converted vehicles on the road and an increased demand for vehicles to be modified for disabled drivers so that they can maintain their independence. These drivers are often willing to take larger risks in order to drive but with bigger and heavier vehicles on the road that are more difficult to handle, more serious injuries are being reported. While the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration allows some exemptions from certain standards on vehicles used by disabled drivers, the National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association is working to promote standards and to educate consumers and the auto industry on the consequences of vehicle modifications. Source: The New York Times, October 25, 2006

New TV/Radio Campaign Features MoDOT Worker Killed In Work Zone

In a sobering reminder of the tragic consequences of reckless driving, a new TV and radio campaign features a Missouri Department of Transportation worker at the scene of a fatal crash asking motorists to drive safely in highway work zones. Just a week later he was killed on the job in another roadside crash by a motorist who drove through orange cones into the work zone. TV and radio spots will run in Missouri this month in advance of the busy holiday travel season, and will appear again in the spring as road construction season begins. To view the TV spot, visit <http://www.modot.org>

Occupational Hazards Names Frito-Lay One Of America's 12 Safest Employers In 2005

The company's safety and workers' compensation programs have received recognition and accolades from the safety community for their corporate risk management and operations safety teams responsible for the well-being of 45,000 employees engaged in manufacturing, field sales and distribution. Between 2000 and 2005, Frito-Lay reduced its injury frequency rate by an impressive 34 percent. In the same time period, the company's total workers' compensation loss rate plunged 31 percent — a \$9.8 million reduction — despite an increasing exposure base and a nationwide upward spiral of workers' compensation medical costs. Operations Safety encompasses the company's 34 manufacturing plants and warehouse operations, while Sales Safety focuses on the company's route sales and distribution employees. To prevent accidents, injuries and vehicle collisions, developments over the past several years have included the addition of behavior-based safety training incorporating



peer-to-peer observations and coaching, mandatory periodic Smith System Driver Training and the introduction of formalized safety management training for more than 1,500 frontline managers. The company recently took out a double-page ad in Transport Topics magazine to recognize the 350 or so drivers who have achieved 1 million, 2 million or 3 million miles of safe driving. About a quarter of the company's over-the-road fleet belongs to the million-mile club.

NSF Study Finds Insomnia's Effects Depends On Age Of Sufferer

More than half of American adults report at least one symptom of insomnia a few nights a week or more, according to the National Sleep Foundation's (NSF's) 2005 Sleep in America poll. The impact of insomnia on health is serious and may include both physical and psychological effects, but the nature of the impact is not always the same for every person. A research team recently reviewed the mental health survey responses of 8,580 people between the ages of 16 and 74 in the United Kingdom and found that insomnia was associated with reduced quality of life and that this was most evident in older people. However, the researchers did not find an age-related difference in the effect of insomnia on physical and mental health status or on levels of daytime fatigue. Source: National Sleep Foundation

Safer Compact Cars Still Lose in Crashes With Larger Vehicles

Despite new safety features (ABS, ESC, side-curtain air bags) that auto manufacturers are adding to small cars, technology just cannot overcome the inherent weight disadvantage when a small car is involved in a crash with a larger vehicle. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety small cars not intrinsically dangerous on own and carmakers are increasingly improving the crash compatibility of different sized vehicles to reduce injury risk which consumers are willing to pay for. Although many new subcompacts earn good ratings in crash tests, size counts against them. IIHS says that 5-star subcompacts are less safe than 5-star larger, heavier vehicles. They predict that fatalities and injuries will rise with the shift to smaller vehicles. Source: The New York Times, October 25, 2006

Power Reports – Demand Down For Medium-Sized Vehicles

While Americans are buying smaller vehicles they are not abandoning larger ones. It is medium-sized models that are fading away. Power Information Network has divided the industry into three classifications: small, medium and large to look at the market because it cuts across all body styles. Since 2000, the small-vehicle share (cars and compact crossovers) has risen sharply. Demand for large vehicles has trailed off in the past year or so as fuel prices soared. But taken together, big SUVs, crossovers, vans, pickups and cars account for a larger share of the market than they did five years ago. On the other hand, medium-sized vehicles - whether sedans, sporty cars, SUVs or pickups have fallen steadily. Source: Automotive News, Nov. 13, 2006

Web Access Coming Soon to Autos

CNW an organization specializing in the auto sector recently conducted a marketing research survey that indicated 40% of prospective auto buyers under 30 years of age wanted in-vehicle email and Web access double the number in a 2004 survey. Initially, PCs will connect through cellular phone signals but in several years will change to Wi-Max, a high-powered Wi-Fi across urban areas. For further information, visit,

http://news.yahoo.com/s/usatoday/20061031/tc_usatoday/webaccessforautosgoesontheroad

Source: USA TODAY, October 31, 2006



Journal Article: Motor Vehicle Event Data Recorders: Validation And Use Of Data For Admission To The Court

Data collected from vehicle Event Data Recorders (EDRs) has been accepted by courts as evidence to be presented at trial. The validity of the data has been established by testing that has been documented in scientific, peer-reviewed literature. Technical literature and case studies are presented to demonstrate the accuracy and validity of the data, along with examples to describe the presentation of some critical information to respond to challenges.

Source: Barbera GJ, Jacobson OH, Bastiaan C, Christopher TA, Anderson DJ. Collision 2006; 1(1): 43-51

News from the USDOT

Advocates Urge NHTSA to Fast Track ESC In Vehicles

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) said it would require automakers to install electronic stability control (ESC) systems in all vehicles by the 2012-model year. NHTSA considers ESC to be safety technology on the par with seatbelts and airbags. Advocates for ESC say the current phase-in over four years — requiring 30 percent of vehicles to have ESC by the 2009-model year, 60 percent by 2010, and 90 percent by 2011 — is too slow. Only about 29 percent of vehicles sold today have standard or optional ESC. IIHS is urging NHTSA to use a more aggressive timeline, saying that research shows ESC reduces single-vehicle crashes by 40 percent and fatal crashes by 56 percent.

Safety Advocates & Automakers Ask Feds To Rewrite EDR Rules

A new federal rule to standardize minimum requirements for event data recorders (EDRs) or “black boxes” in vehicles wasn’t expected to be controversial, but it has ignited a firestorm of protests from groups that largely agree the information collected by the devices improves auto safety, according to the Web site www.theday.com. All U.S. and foreign automakers have asked the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to rewrite the rule because they say it’s too vague and will cost too much to implement. And safety advocates say it doesn’t go far enough. A NHTSA spokesman said last week the agency will respond to the requests, but did not outline a time frame. If denied by NHTSA, the petitioners can ask a judge to block the rule from being implemented. The new rule is set to take effect in September 2010. Automakers have asked NHTSA to respond by March because product planning for 2010 models would begin as early as next year. Forty states haven’t passed any legislation governing EDRs. Ten states — Arkansas, California, Colorado, Maine, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, North Dakota, Texas, and Virginia — have laws on the books. The laws generally require manufacturers to disclose the presence of recorders in vehicles or clarify that the data is owned by vehicle owners and can only be accessed with their permission.

Work-Life

Frightened NJ Boy Refused To Ride With Drunk Parents

The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported that a NJ husband and wife will both face drunken driving and child endangerment charges after their 10-year-old, fearing for his safety, refused to ride in their vehicles and began running away on a highway over the weekend. Their case got police attention after a motorist saw the couple in their two vehicles and their 10-year-old son leaving the scene. The motorist called police, who picked up the boy running along the highway. The boy told police that he had been riding with his father who had been drinking and was trying to light a pipe containing marijuana when he crashed into a guardrail, the boy told police. His mother had been traveling in a car in front of them, the boy said.



New Teen Drinking Prevention Campaign To Target Parents

A new prevention campaign sponsored by the alcohol-industry-backed Century Council targets parents who allow their children to drink. The campaign, called "We Don't Serve Teens," addresses research showing that 65 percent of underage drinkers get their alcohol from family or friends. Only 7 percent of youth report that they obtained alcohol from retailers who failed to check for identification. The group's message to parents is that allowing youth to drink is both dangerous and illegal. "Turning a blind eye is just as irresponsible as putting a drink in their hands," said Century Council chair, Susan Molinari. The group contends that lax parental attitudes about youth drinking undermine its prevention work. For further information, visit <http://www.centurycouncil.org/>

Parents And Safety Advocates Push For Car Safety Bills

Three common ways that vehicles hurt children are when they shift out of park, by back-overs, and when trapped by power windows. Back-overs are the most frequent and deadliest. Families impacted by these incidents are supporting two bills that would mandate new technology and new standards designed to stop children from dying in such incidents. It's a contentious debate in automotive safety, but one that's elicited more tears than action so far. While acknowledging the parents' anguish, automakers have fought their proposals to a standstill. They point to voluntary improvements, such as transmissions that can't be accidentally pulled out of park, and argue the technology that might be required would cost hundreds of millions of dollars and is not fail-safe, each system has weaknesses. The industry also maintains that the best sensors and cameras on the back of a vehicle can't replace human eyes and ears, raising the question of how much responsibility the parents should shoulder.

Teens Text Message While Driving

Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety surveyed teens on their biggest distractions while driving and found cellphone texting at the top of the list. "It was a surprise to us and certainly something that will be considered for future surveys," said David Melton, who headed the survey. Thirty-seven percent of teens cited text messaging as extremely or very distracting; 20 percent said they were distracted because of their emotional state and 19 percent cited friends in the car. According to Carolyn Gorman, of the Insurance Information Institute, "Teenage drivers are the worst drivers on the road, and if they're text messaging, it just adds to the danger, not only to them but to the rest of us." As dangerous as it may seem, most teens who text while driving aren't breaking any laws. Only Colorado, Delaware, Maryland and Tennessee have banned cell phone use among young drivers.

NSC Calls Teen Driving Deaths a National Crisis

The National Safety Council (NSC) has called the teen crash rate a national crisis. Fifty percent of premature teen deaths are due to motor vehicle crashes and 50 percent of these incidents involve teen passengers. Graduated licensing programs have proven to be the most effective in reducing teen crashes. Parents have a major role to play in supervision and training. Teen driving should be family issue.

ASTHO Released Fact Sheet On Child And Adolescent Safety

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) has released a new fact sheet, "Leading Causes of Injuries Among Children and Adolescents." The two-page publication covers information related to motor vehicle injuries, child and adolescent violence, recreational injuries, child maltreatment and suicide – as well as opportunities for prevention of child injury in each of these areas. To download this free resource, go to

<http://www.astho.org/pubs/AdolescentfactsheetfinalAugust2006.pdf>



International Traffic Safety News

In UK Work-Related Roadway Incidents Will Not Be Reported In RIDDOR

Fleet safety groups have reacted negatively to a decision that work-related road incidents will not be included in Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR), the compulsory reporting system concerning employee injuries. Its omission in the Health and Safety Commission review – citing the cost and administrative burden it would place on employers as a key reason – sends a signal to employers that at-work road safety is less important than other forms of employee well-being. The 1995 RIDDOR requires firms to report accidents to employees resulting in them being off ill for more than three days. A review concluded that it was better for the police to investigate crashes and contact the Health and Safety Executive if it thought there was employer liability, rather than fleets being obliged to report accidents. Source: FleetNews

Lack Of Resources Blamed For Failure To Implement Road Safety Policy

Lack of resources and time were identified as the main reasons why some UK fleet managers have not implemented occupational road risk policies. Some 170 fleet operators were asked by Pro-Drive why they had not introduced appropriate policies. At the top of the list was budget constraints as funds have been allocated to other vital projects, followed by employee time constraints, with commercial pressures making it difficult to justify days spent driver training. For further information, visit http://www.nurs.co.uk/news/briefs/cms/1163069807212694732404_1.htm